

# A Little Book for Holy Week.

*MEDITATIONS AND READINGS  
FROM PALM SUNDAY TO EASTER.*

WITH TWO VISITS TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT  
ON THE ALTAR OF REPOSE.

COMPILED BY  
RICHARD F. CLARKE, S.J.



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CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY,  
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## PREFACE.

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ALL good Catholics are desirous to spend Holy Week well, and many have leisure during it to undertake some special devotion in honour of our Lord's Sacred Passion.

The following pages are intended to promote their pious endeavours, by suggesting suitable thoughts for their consideration. The Meditations and Readings are intended either for use at home or during the various services in the Church. The Meditations, for instance, may be made during Mass, and the Readings during Tenebræ. Two Visits to the Blessed Sacrament by St. Alphonsus are inserted on Holy Thursday, to be made before the Altar of Repose.

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## PALM SUNDAY.

### MEDITATION.

#### The Dignity of the Passion.

*Behold, thy King cometh to thee.* (St. John xii. 15.)

1. What do we mean by dignity? We mean some gift or quality that tends to raise him who possesses it above ordinary men. We speak of the dignity of a king or noble; of the still higher dignity of a priest. But there is no dignity like the dignity of suffering for God, and he who has suffered most for Him will have the highest dignity in Heaven. Hence merely by reason of His Sacred Passion, our Lord has the highest dignity in the whole Court of Heaven.

2. But the dignity of suffering depends not only on its intensity, but on the natural dignity of the person who suffers. The sufferings of Jesus Christ were the sufferings of a person of infinite dignity. Hence they have a sort of infinite dignity of their own. That He who was the King of Glory should submit to the insults of His creatures, conferred upon His Sacred Humanity a dignity without end, and a dignity which, as Man, He would not have had unless He had suffered. O Jesus, my Lord, grant that I may watch Thy sacred sufferings, and learn to appreciate the true dignity of suffering for Thee.

3. The dignity of suffering depends also on the end for which we suffer. If it is for a selfish end, or through our own fault, there is little or no dignity in our suffering; if for a noble end, it corresponds to the nobility of the end aimed at. Jesus suffered in order to win for sinful man an eternity of happiness: what end more glorious than this, more unselfish, more worthy of a God? Learn then to recognize under the humiliation of Jesus suffering His true dignity, and try to follow in His steps.

## SPIRITUAL READING.

## On the Love of the Saints for the Passion.

From *The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ*, pp. 19—22,  
by St. Alphonsus Liguori.

A certain devout solitary prayed to God to teach him what he could do in order to love Him perfectly. Our Lord revealed to him that there was no more efficient way to arrive at the perfect love of Him than to meditate constantly on His Passion. St. Teresa lamented and complained of certain books which had taught her to leave off meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, because this might be an impediment to the contemplation of His Divinity; and the Saint exclaimed, "O Lord of my soul, O my Jesus Crucified, my treasure; I never remember this opinion without thinking that I have been guilty of great treachery. And is it possible that Thou, my Lord, couldst be an obstacle to me in the way of a greater good? Whence, then, do all good things come to me, but from Thee?" And she then added, "I have seen that, in order to please God, and to induce Him to grant us great graces, He wills that they should all pass through the hands of this most Sacred Humanity, in which His Divine Majesty declared that He took pleasure." (*Life*, c. 22.)

For this reason, Father Balthasar Alvarez said that ignorance of the treasures that we possess in Jesus was the ruin of Christians; and therefore his most favourite and usual meditation was on the Passion of Jesus Christ. He meditated especially on three of the sufferings of Jesus, His poverty, contempt, and pain; and he exhorted his penitents to meditate frequently on the Passion of our Redeemer, telling them that they should not con-

sider that they had done anything at all, until they had arrived at retaining Jesus Crucified continually present in their hearts.

"He who desires," says St. Bonaventure, "to go on advancing from virtue to virtue, from grace to grace, should meditate continually on the Passion of Jesus." And he adds that "there is no practice more profitable for the entire sanctification of the soul than the frequent meditation of the sufferings of Jesus Christ."

St. Augustine also said that a single tear shed at the remembrance of the Passion of Jesus is worth more than a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or a year of fasting on bread and water. Yes, because it was for this end that our Saviour suffered so much, in order that we should think of His sufferings; because if we think on them, it is impossible not to be inflamed with Divine love: *The charity of Christ presseth us.* says St. Paul. (2 Cor. v. 14.) Jesus is loved by few, because few consider the pains He has suffered for us; but he that frequently considers them cannot live without loving Jesus. "The charity of Christ presseth us." He will feel himself so constrained by his love that he will not find it possible to refrain from loving a God so full of love, Who has suffered so much to make us love Him.

Therefore the Apostle said that he desired to know nothing but Jesus, and Jesus Crucified; that is, the love that He has shown us on the Cross: *I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified.* (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And, in truth, from what books can we better learn the science of the saints—that is, the science of loving God—than from Jesus Crucified? That great servant of God, Brother Bernard of Corlione, the Capuchin, not being able to read, his brother religious wanted to teach him, upon which he went to consult his

crucifix; but Jesus answered him from the cross, "What is reading? what are books? Behold, I am the book wherein thou mayest continually read the love I have borne thee." O great subject to be considered during our whole life and during all eternity! A God dead for the love of us! a God dead for the love of us! O wonderful subject!

St. Thomas Aquinas was one day paying a visit to St. Bonaventure, and asked him from what book he had drawn all the beautiful lessons he had written. St. Bonaventure showed him the image of the Crucified, which was completely blackened by all the kisses that he had given it, and said, "This is my book whence I receive everything that I write; and it has taught me whatever little I know."

In short, all the Saints have learned the art of loving God from the study of the crucifix. Brother John of Alvernia, every time that he beheld Jesus wounded, could not restrain his tears. Brother James of Tuderto, when he heard the Passion of our Redeemer read, not only wept bitterly, but broke out into loud sobs, overcome with the love with which he was inflamed toward his beloved Lord.

It was this sweet study of the crucifix which made St. Francis become a great seraph. He wept so continually in meditating on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, that he almost entirely lost his sight. On one occasion, being found crying out and weeping, he was asked what was the matter with him. "What ails me?" answered the Saint. "I weep over the sorrows and insults inflicted on my Lord; and my sorrow is increased when I think of those ungrateful men who do not love Him, but live without any thought of Him." Every time that he heard the bleating of a lamb, he felt himself touched with compassion at the thought of the death of Jesus,



the Immaculate Lamb, drained of every drop of blood upon the Cross for the sins of the world. And therefore this loving Saint could find no subject on which he exhorted his brethren with greater eagerness than the constant remembrance of the Passion of Jesus.

This, then, is the book—Jesus Crucified—which, if we constantly read it, will teach us, on the one hand, to have a lively fear of sin, and, on the other hand, will inflame us with love for a God so full of love for us; while we read in these wounds the great malice of sin, which reduced a God to suffer so bitter a death in order to satisfy the Divine justice, and the love which our Saviour has shown us in choosing to suffer so much in order to prove to us how much He loved us.

## MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

### MEDITATION.

#### The Advantages of Meditating on the Passion.

*Look to Me, be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.* (Isaias xlv. 22.)

1. The Passion of Jesus Christ is the shortest way to justifying grace. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, and all who looked upon it with faith were saved, so was the Son of Man lifted up, that all who believe in Him with a faith that carries with it supernatural charity, moving them to true sorrow, may receive remission of their sins through faith in His Blood. (St. John iii. 14, 15; Romans iii. 23—26.) Do I thus look upon the crucifix with repentant love? If so, I may have all confidence that my sins are washed away by His Precious Blood.

2. The Passion of Christ is also the means of obtaining from God all that we want. It is an argument that He cannot withstand. If God gave us His own well-beloved Son, says St. Paul, He gave us all else in Him. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, hath He not with Him also freely given us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) Do I urge this all-powerful argument before the throne of God?

3. The Passion of Christ is also the surest means of kindling our love. We love Him because He first loved us, and showed His love by shedding for us the last drop of His Precious Blood. We see in His Sacred Passion what the forgiveness of our sins cost Him, and how much He has forgiven us. To whom much is forgiven, he loves much. We see how His love was so great that He suffered not for His friends alone, but for sinners, for those who neglected, outraged, and insulted Him, that He might win them to God. How can I fail to love Him, Who loved me and gave Himself for me?

## SPIRITUAL READING.

**The Agony in the Garden.**

From *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, pp. 356—359, by Cardinal Newman.

There, then, in that most awful hour, knelt the Saviour of the world, putting off the defences of His Divinity, dismissing His reluctant Angels, who in myriads were ready at His call, and opening His arms, baring His breast, sinless as He was, to the assault of His foe,—of a foe whose breath was a pestilence, and whose embrace was an agony. There He knelt, motionless and still, while the vile and horrible fiend clad His spirit in a robe steeped in all that is hateful and heinous in human crime, which clung close round His Heart, and filled His conscience, and found its way into every sense and pore of His mind, and spread over Him a moral leprosy, till He almost felt Himself that which He never could be, and which His foe would fain have made Him.

O the horror, when He looked, and did not know Himself, and felt as a foul and loathsome sinner, from His vivid perception of that mass of corruption which poured over his head and ran down even to the skirts of His garments! O the distraction, when He found His eyes, and hands, and feet, and lips, and heart, as if the members of the evil one, and not of God! Are these the hands of the immaculate Lamb of God, once innocent, but now red with ten thousand barbarous deeds of blood? are these His lips, not uttering prayer, and praise, and holy blessings, but defiled with oaths, and blasphemies, and doctrines of devils? or His eyes, profaned as they are by all the evil visions and idolatrous fascinations for which men have abandoned their Adorable Creator? And His ears, they ring with sounds of

revelry and of strife; and His heart is frozen with avarice, and cruelty, and unbelief; and His very memory is laden with every sin which has been committed since the Fall, in all regions of the earth, with the pride of the old giants, and the lusts of the five cities, and the obduracy of Egypt, and the ambition of Babel, and the unthankfulness and scorn of Israel.

O who does not know the misery of a haunting thought which comes again and again, in spite of rejection, to annoy, if it cannot seduce? or of some odious and sickening imagination, in no sense one's own, but forced upon the mind from without? or of evil knowledge, gained with or without a man's fault, but which he would give a great price to be rid of for ever? And these gather around Thee, Blessed Lord, in millions now; they come in troops more numerous than the locust or the palmer-worm, or the plagues of hail and flies, and frogs, which were sent against Pharaoh. Of the living and of the dead and of the unborn, of the lost and of the saved, of Thy people and of strangers, of sinners and of Saints, all sins are there. Thy dearest are there, Thy Saints and Thy chosen are upon Thee; Thy three Apostles, Peter, James, and John, but not as comforters, but as accusers, like the friends of Job, "sprinkling dust towards heaven," and heaping curses on Thy head.

All are there but one; one only is not there, one only; for she had no part in sin, she only could console Thee, and therefore is not nigh. She will be near Thee on the Cross, she is separated from Thee in the garden. She has been Thy companion and then confidant through Thy life, she interchanged with Thee the pure thoughts and holy meditations of thirty years; but her virgin ear may not take in, nor may her immacu-

late heart conceive, what now is in vision before Thee. None was equal to the weight but God; sometimes before Thy Saints Thou hast brought the image of a single sin, as it appears in the light of Thy countenance, a venial sin, perhaps, and not a mortal; and they have told us that the sight did all but kill them, nay, would have killed them, had it not been instantly withdrawn.

The Mother of God, for all her sanctity, nay by reason of it, could not have borne one company of that innumerable progeny of Satan which compass Thee about. It is the long history of a world, and God alone can bear the load of it. Hopes blighted, vows broken, lights quenched, warnings scorned, opportunities lost; the innocent betrayed, the young hardened, the penitent relapsing, the just overcome, the aged failing; the sophistry of misbelief, the wilfulness of passion, the tyranny of habit, the canker of remorse, the wasting of care, the anguish of shame, the pining of disappointment, the sickness of despair; such cruel, such pitiable spectacles, such heartrending, revolting, detestable, maddening scenes; nay, the haggard faces, the convulsed lips, the flushed cheek, the dark brow of the willing victims of rebellion, they are all before Him now; they are upon Him and in Him. They are with Him instead of that ineffable peace which has inhabited His soul since the moment of His conception. They are upon Him, they are all but His own; He cries to His Father as if He were the criminal, not the victim; His agony takes the form of guilt and compunction. He is doing penance, He is making confession, He is exercising contrition with a reality and a virtue infinitely greater than that of all Saints and penitents together; for He is the One Victim for us all, the sole Satisfaction, the real Penitent, all but the real sinner.

## TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

## MEDITATION.

## The Beauty of the Passion.

*Thou art the fairest among the sons of men.* (Psalm xliv. 3.)

1. It seems a strange thing to speak of the beauty of the Passion when we read of our Blessed Lord that in His Sacred Passion there was no beauty in Him, nor comeliness, and when we contemplate His Body torn and mangled, covered with blood, and with its human form scarcely discernible. Yet in the sight of God and the holy angels, never was the Sacred Humanity of our Lord so beautiful as then. Learn not to judge by appearances. "Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord looketh at the heart." (1 Kings xvi. 7.)

2. No physical or even moral beauty in the natural order is to be compared with the beauty of a work done for God, and under the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. Never was there a work so full of grace as the Sacrifice that our Lord offered of Himself on Calvary. Hence there was never any work done on earth so beautiful in God's sight. Learn from this that if we desire our lives to be beautiful in His sight, they must be lives of self-sacrifice for God's sake, lives of obedience to Him, lives of which grace is the moving principle. Is this the character of my life?

3. The beauty of a supernatural action depends on the excellence of him who does it, and the purity of his motive. The ordinary actions of a saint are more beautiful than the noblest deeds of ordinary men. What then must have been the beauty of the action of the Saint of Saints! And above all, what must have been the beauty of that sacrifice of Himself which was the crowning act of His whole life? Learn then that you must be more holy if you desire your actions to be beautiful before God.

## SPIRITUAL READING.

## On the Beauty of Christ in His Passion.

From *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, pp. 319—322, by Cardinal Newman.

“Who is This, that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra? Why is Thy cloak red, and Thy garments like to them that tread in the wine-vat?”

The Maker of man, the Wisdom of God, has come, not in strength, but in weakness. He has come, not to assert a claim, but to pay a debt. Instead of wealth, He has come poor; instead of honour, He has come in ignominy; instead of blessedness, He has come to suffer. He has been delivered over from His birth to pain and contempt; His delicate frame is worn down by cold and heat, by hunger and sleeplessness; His hands are rough and bruised with a mechanic's toil; His eyes are dimmed with weeping; His name is cast out as evil. He is flung amid the throng of man; He wanders from place to place; He is the companion of sinners. He is followed by a mixed multitude, who care more for meat and drink than for His teaching, or by a city's populace which deserts Him in the day of trial. And at length “the Brightness of God's glory and the Image of His Substance” is fettered, hauled to and fro, buffeted, spit upon, mocked, cursed, scourged, and tortured. “He hath no beauty nor comeliness; He is despised and the least of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with feebleness;” nay He is a “leper, smitten of God and an abject.” And so His clothes are torn off, and He is lifted up upon the bitter Cross, and there He hangs, a spectacle for profane, impure, and

savage eyes, and a mockery for the evil spirit whom He had cast down into Hell.

O wayward man! discontented first that your God is far from you, discontented again when He has drawn near, complaining first that He is high, complaining next that He is low,—unhumbled being, when wilt thou cease to make thyself thine own centre, and learn that God is infinite in all He does, infinite when He reigns in Heaven, infinite when He serves on earth, exacting our homage in the midst of His Angels, and winning it from us in the midst of sinners? Adorable He is in His eternal rest, adorable in the glory of His court, adorable in the beauty of His works, most adorable of all, most royal, most persuasive in His deformity.

Think you not, my brethren, that to Mary, when she held His light lifeless weight in her maternal arms, when she gazed on the pale countenance and the dislocated limbs of her God, when she traced the wandering lines of blood, when she counted the weals, the bruises, and the wounds, which dishonoured that virginal flesh, think you not that to her eyes it was more beautiful than when she first worshipped it, pure, radiant, and fragrant, on the night of His nativity? *Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus*, as the Church sings; “My beloved is white and ruddy; His whole form doth breathe of love, and doth provoke to love in turn; His drooping head, His open palms, and His breast all bare. My beloved is white and ruddy, choice out of thousands; His head is of the finest gold; His locks are branches of palm-trees, black as a raven. His eyes as doves upon brooks of waters, which are washed with milk, and sit beside the plentiful streams. His cheeks are as beds of spices set by the perfumers; His lips are lilies dropping choice myrrh. His hands are turned and golden-



full of jacinths ; His throat is most sweet, and He is all lovely. Such is my Beloved, and He is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem."

So is it, O dear and gracious Lord ; " the day of death is better than the day of birth, and better is the house of mourning than the house of feasting." Better for me that Thou shouldst come thus abject and dishonourable, than hadst Thou taken on Thee a body fair as Adam's, when He came out of Thy Hand. Thy glory sullied, Thy beauty marred, those five wounds welling out blood, those temples torn and raw, that broken heart, that crushed and livid frame, they teach me more, than wert Thou Solomon " in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his heart's joy." The gentle and tender expression of that Countenance is no new beauty, or created grace ; it is but the manifestation, in a human form, of attributes which have been from everlasting. Thou canst not change, O Jesus, and, as Thou art still mystery, so wast Thou always love, I cannot comprehend Thee more than I did, before I saw Thee on the Cross ; but I have gained my lesson. As I adore Thee, O Lover of souls, in Thy humiliation, so will I admire Thee and embrace Thee in Thy infinite and everlasting power.

## WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

### MEDITATION.

#### The Charity of the Passion.

*He loved me, and gave Himself for me. (Galat. ii. 20.)*

1. The virtue that impresses us the most in the Passion of Christ is the wondrous charity that made it a joy to the Son of God to endure the Cross and despise the shame for us sinners. Behold how He loved us! If He loved us with such a love as to make Him willing to endure His Sacred Passion for us, the least we can do is to show our gratitude by loving others, and showing charity to them for His sake.

2. But our Lord manifested in His Passion a special form of charity which is not possible to human nature without the help of God. He loved His enemies, and loved them so dearly, that for them He shed the last drop of His Precious Blood. It is easy to love our friends, but to love our enemies is a hard task. Yet our Lord enjoined it on us when He said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you." Do I carry out this command? or do I nurse petty spite and ill-will?

3. What are the characteristics of the love which our Lord showed to us poor sinners? (1) It was a generous love, anxious to sacrifice itself to the uttermost for those He loved. (2) It was a disinterested love; what had He to gain from us? Could we give Him anything that He had not before? (3) It was an efficacious love, which was not satisfied with words, but manifested itself in actions sufficient to move the hardest heart to love Him who had so loved us.

*SPIRITUAL READING.***Mary's grief at meeting Jesus.**

From *The Foot of the Cross*, pp. 267—269, by Father Faber.

There was another grief in this dolour, which was new to our Lady, and caused in her heart in an incomparable degree the acute pain which the sight of sacrilege causes to the Saints. She saw Him in the hands of others who could touch Him and come near Him, while she was kept far off. How she longed to wipe the blood from His face with her veil, to part His tangled hair, to remove with lightest touch that cruel crown, to lift the Cross off His shoulders, and see whether her broken heart would not give her superhuman strength to carry it for Him! O there were countless ministries in which a mother's hand was needed by that dear Victim of our sins!

And think of the plenitude of the rights she had over Him, more than any mother over any son since the world began! He had acknowledged them Himself. He had made her assert them openly in the Temple. But these men knew no more of the Mother of God, than poor heretics do. Moreover they, who had trampled her Son underfoot, would have made but little scruple of her rights. In the times of Bethlehem and Egypt it had been her joy to touch Him, in the performance of her maternal office. Her love had risen so high, that it could find no vent except in breathless reverence, and it was the touch of His Sacred Body which hushed her soul with that thrill of reverence.

Saints at the altar have exulted with the Blessed Sacrament in their hands, till they rose up from the predella in the light air, and swayed to and fro, like a bough in summer, with the palpitations of their ecstasy.

How many times must we multiply that joy to reach Mary's! She had only not grudged Joseph the embraces of her Child, because she loved him with the holiest transports of conjugal affection, and best satisfied her love by giving him his turn with Jesus. The novelty had never worn off. The joy had never become thinner from use. The reverence only grew more reverent from custom. The thought of it came back to her now, and the waves of grief beat up against her heart as if they would have washed it away. She had seen the filthy hands of the public executioner grasping His neck and shoulder. She had seen the miry foot of some sinful soldier spurning His bruised flesh. She had seen them brutally knock the wooden Cross against His blessed Head, and drive the spikes of the thorns still further in.

St. Catherine of Genoa had to be supported by God lest she should die when He showed her in vision the real malice of a venial sin. What if, with her eyes thus spiritually couched, she had beheld the malice which can trample the Blessed Sacrament underfoot in the sewers of the street! The love of a whole Christian land will rise with one emotion to make reparation for a sacrilege against the Blessed Sacrament. They, who have been but too indifferent to their own sins, will then afflict themselves with fasting, and impair their own comforts by abundant alms. It is the instinct of faith's loyalty, and of the love which lies in reality, however appearances may be against it, at the bottom of every believing heart. In truth the feeling of sacrilege is like bodily pain. It is as if we were being cruelly handled ourselves. Holy people, both religious and seculars, have offered their lives to God in reparation of a sacrilege, and have rejoiced when He deigned to accept the offering.

To die for the Blessed Sacrament—that would be a sweet end, glorious also, but more sweet than glorious, because it would so satisfy our love! But the sacrilege that day in the streets of Jerusalem! Mary's woe is simply unimaginable. She would have died a thousand deaths to have made reparation. Ah but, dearest Mother! thou must live, which to thee is worse far than death, and thy life must be thy reparation! All the evils which others find in death, thou findest in life, and many more beside. To thee it would be as great a joy, as all the seven dolours all together were a sorrow, if thou mightest not outlive three o'clock that Friday afternoon. But there is a bar between thee and death, a whole omnipotence. So thou must be contented, as thou ever art, and envy the accepted thief, and for our sakes consent to live!

## MAUNDY THURSDAY.

### MEDITATION.

#### The Patience of the Passion.

*As a lamb before the shearers so He opened not His mouth.*  
(Acts viii. 32.)

Patience is the voluntary endurance of that which is painful to human nature, and its value is in proportion to the greatness of the suffering endured and the supernatural motive that leads to its endurance. Was there ever patience like that of Jesus Christ?

1. No human being ever suffered in any sort of proportion to the sufferings of Jesus Christ. His mental and physical sufferings were such as even He could not have borne, if He had not availed Himself of His Divinity to enable His Sacred Humanity to suffer the more. "Behold and see," He cries out by the mouth of the Prophet, "if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow, with which the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger."

2. What was the motive that induced our Lord to suffer? It was the love He bore to His Eternal Father, and the desire that He should be glorified. Though it is true that love for man brought Him down from Heaven, yet His love for man was but a fruit of His love for God, of His desire that His Kingdom should be spread over the whole earth. Is the promotion of God's glory my one object?

3. In the Blessed Sacrament our Lord continues His Sacred Passion. There He endures all the outrages and insults of wicked men, all the neglect and indifference of tepid Christians. He waits patiently in the Tabernacle for men to go and visit Him. He allows Himself to be carried hither and thither, to be received by bad and good alike. Am I thus patient under neglect and unkindness from others, like my Saviour Jesus Christ?

## SPIRITUAL READING.

## The Scourging.

From *The History of the Sacred Passion*, pp. 192—194, by  
Father de la Palma.

Our Saviour, then, being thus bound, the executioners began to scourge that most delicate body, either with rods, according to the custom of the Romans, or with thongs and scourges of leather, according to that of the Jews, or with both one and the other. And the scourgers (who according to some writers were six) succeeded one another, and let loose their frenzy and accursed fury on the most sacred flesh and ineffable patience of the Son of God: a spectacle the most horrid the world has ever seen. For men were scourging the Son of God in the sight of the Eternal Father and of all the angels of Heaven, and yet there was no one to hinder them. Draw near, all mankind, and enter the Prætorium of Pilate and behold God Himself scourged for your sins! Learn, O man, what thou art worth, since thou wert bought at such a price, and how much thou owest to Him Who so liberally paid it for thee, and, if thou understandest how to estimate the value and dignity of thy redemption, be ashamed to make thyself again the slave of sin!

As to the number of strokes which our Lord received, who shall count them, for some say that they were more than five thousand? It was, however, impossible that the strokes could be few, seeing that they were inflicted for the chastisement of the sins, so many and so great, which men commit. Thus Isaias says (liii. 5, 6), that God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, that He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins, and that the chastisement which our sins merit was laid upon His shoulders. Moreover, the Law commanded

(Deut. xxv. 2) that according to the measure of the crime the measure of the stripes should be. But what measure could there be to His scourging, since our sins were altogether without measure? Therefore, the holy Prophets so long before had said that He remained without form or comeliness, and that His Body was as that of a leper, and that from the sole of His foot to the highest part of His head there was no soundness in Him.

If the feelings of the Prophets were so deep who beheld Him afar off, what must His most holy Mother have felt, who stood so near Him? For very shortly news must have reached her of the resolution taken by Pilate, and how he had condemned her Son to be scourged, and at these most afflicting tidings were renewed her own tears and the tears of those holy women who bore her company. For if mothers are very deeply wounded when their sons and husbands are subjected to outrage, what must the heart of the Virgin have felt when she knew that her Son was about to be subjected to this outrage and suffering? It may be that in such a strait she could not restrain herself from approaching nearer to the Prætorium, whence she saw, or at least heard, the strokes of the scourges, which would sound loudly in her ears, and would deeply pierce her heart, and draw as many tears from her eyes as drops of blood from the Body of her Son.

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### VISITS TO THE SEPULCHRE.

#### Visit I.

From *Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament*, pp. 22, 23, by  
St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Worldlings feel so happy in the society of a friend, that they lose entire days in his company. They who love not Jesus, experience tediousness in remaining



with Him in the tabernacle. The saints enjoyed a paradise before the Holy Sacrament. After her death, St. Teresa said from Heaven to one of her religious: "We who rejoice in Heaven and you who suffer on earth ought to be the same in purity and love. And what we do in Heaven before the Divine Essence, you should do on earth before the Most Holy Sacrament." Jesus then, in the Adorable Eucharist, ought to be our Paradise on earth.

O Immaculate Lamb, immolated for us on the Cross! remember that I am one of those souls whom Thou hast redeemed by so many sorrows and by so painful a death. Since Thou hast given Thyself entirely to me, and since Thou dost daily offer Thyself in sacrifice for me on the altar, grant that Thou mayest be for ever mine, and that I may for ever belong entirely to Thee. I offer myself to Thee without reserve, that Thou mayest do with me what Thou pleasest. I give Thee my will: chain it to Thyself with the sweet bonds of Thy love, that it may be the eternal slave of Thy most holy will. I wish to live no longer for the gratifications of my own desires, but for the sole purpose of pleasing Thee. Grant me the grace to think only of pleasing Thee, and to desire only what Thou dost desire. I love Thee, O my dear Saviour! with my whole heart. I love Thee because Thou dost desire to be beloved by me. I love Thee because Thou art worthy of all my love. It grieves me that I do not love Thee as much as Thou deservest. I would wish to die for the love of Thee. Lord, accept my desire: give me Thy love. Amen, Amen.

### Visit II.

*Visits*, pp. 46—48.

The venerable Father Francis Olimpio used to say, that there is nothing so much calcul'ated to

kindle the fire of Divine love in the hearts of men as the Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Hence our Lord appeared to St. Catherine of Siena, in the Blessed Eucharist, as a furnace of love, from which Divine flames went forth to all parts of the earth. The saint was astonished to find that all men were not on fire with the love of a God who had shown so much love to man. My Jesus, inflame my soul with Thy love. Grant that I may think only of Thee, and that I may desire, and seek, and sigh after Thee alone. O happy me, if this holy fire of Thine shall possess my whole being, and shall continue, during the remainder of my days, to consume in me all earthly affections!

O Divine Word! O my Jesus! I see Thee entirely sacrificed and annihilated on the altar for the love of me. Since, then, Thou dost sacrifice Thyself as a victim of love for me, it is my duty to consecrate myself entirely to Thee. Yes, my God and my supreme Lord, I sacrifice to Thee my whole soul, my whole being, my whole will, and my entire life. O Eternal Father! I unite this poor sacrifice of mine with the infinite sacrifice which Jesus, Thy Son and my Saviour, offered once on the Cross, and which He offers every day so often on our altars. Accept this offering through the merits of Jesus, and give me the grace to repeat it every day of my life, and to die sacrificing my whole being to Thy honour. I desire the grace bestowed on so many martyrs, to die for the love of Thee. But if I am unworthy of so great a favour, grant me at least, O Lord! the grace cheerfully to sacrifice to Thee my life, by embracing that death which Thou wilt appoint for me. Lord, I desire this grace; I wish to die with the intention of honouring and pleasing Thee. From this moment I sacrifice my life to Thee; I offer to Thee my death whenever and in what way soever it shall happen.

## GOOD FRIDAY.

## MEDITATION.

## The Attractiveness of the Passion.

*I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Me.*

(St. John xii. 32.)

1. The Passion of Jesus Christ is the most wonderful tragedy that the world has ever seen. In it we witness the agony and death of a God tortured and murdered by His own creatures. What sight so wondrous as this? What sight so attractive to sinners? In Thee, O Jesus, dying for me, are fixed all my hopes for time and for eternity. Grant that I may always trust in Thee and love Thee with my whole heart and soul.

2. The Passion of Christ is also attractive to us because we know that it is the model of what our lives must be if we are to obtain a high place in Heaven. If we have been conformed to the likeness of His Death we shall be also to the likeness of His Resurrection. We have a sort of instinctive consciousness that suffering is necessary to purify us and prepare us for Heaven, and that in the Passion of Christ we have the type and pattern of what human nature must suffer in order that it may be rendered fit for the presence of God.

3. We must all suffer as we pass through this valley of tears, and we are desirous to know how we should behave under the inevitable lot that is in store for us. Where are we to look for strength to endure? Where are we to seek for consolation? Who will sympathize with us and help us when sorrow seems to overwhelm us? To all these questions we find an answer as we gaze upon the scene of Calvary. O Jesus, may we look to Thee in every trial and sorrow!

## SPIRITUAL READING.

**The Glory of the Passion before God.**

From *The History of the Sacred Passion*, pp. 288—290,  
by Father de la Palma.

The Eternal Father beheld this spectacle, so wonderful in every way, and so worthy of His eyes; and if we are to speak of so sublime and secret a mystery in the language of men, no words can describe the joy and exultation which He felt on beholding the great deeds wrought by His most loving Son upon the Cross, and which were all for His greater glory and the manifestation of His holiness. If a human father rejoices when he sees his son come forth armed for the combat, seated firmly upon his steed with courage and noble bearing, with nothing weak or craven in his mien, and then beholds him rout his enemies, and subdue and trample them under foot gloriously, especially if he has entered on the quarrel on account of the insults offered to his father, and in order to satisfy his honour, what must have been the complacency of the Eternal Father at the sight of His most beloved and obedient Son, to see Him so well set on the Cross, showing no sign of weakness or impatience, suffering with so much meekness, offering Himself with such charity, inspiring His opponents with terror through His courage and valour, revenging the insults offered to His Father, satisfying His honour, and making a great exhibition of the justice and mercy of God and a manifestation of His glory and sanctity?

Again, if the smoke of the ancient sacrifices, in which the flesh of animals was consumed with material fire, was accepted by God in the odour of sanctity, how acceptable to Him must this sacrifice

have been, in which the Priest was His most beloved Son, true Man and true God, offering Himself on the altar of the Cross as a living and acceptable sacrifice, shedding all His Blood as the price and purification of our sins; where also His Body was consumed in the fire of suffering, and His Heart in the fire of charity? God was doubtless so satisfied with this payment, and so honoured by this sacrifice, that He began from that moment to take no pleasure in the old sacrifices of the Law, which had only pleased Him in so far as they had been the representation and shadow of this new sacrifice.

This is that sacrifice, which being offered once only, was sufficient for all men and for all ages, without there being need of any other. For by this sacrifice alone was the anger of God appeased, His justice satisfied, sins pardoned, the world reconciled, and the gifts of grace and glory earned for men. And as God promised to Noe, that when it rained abundantly he should behold His rainbow (which He had placed in the clouds in token of His friendship for man), so that the earth should not again be destroyed by water, so, much more, God beholding His Son suspended on the Cross, with His hands stretched out like a bow, takes from out the bow of His anger the arrows which He had been ready to send forth, and in place of chastisements gives embraces, more forced and conquered by this powerful Bow, which is Christ, to show mercy, than irritated by our sins to take vengeance for them.

For, as the reason why Christ loved man is not man but God, so likewise the reason why God has promised so many good things to man is not man himself, but Christ our Redeemer. Again, the reason why the Son loves us, is because the Father commanded Him to do so, and the reason why His Father looks on us with favour, is because His Son has entreated

it and merited it. These are those supercelestial planets, by whose marvellous aspect the Church is governed, and by which all the influences of grace are sent down upon the world.

How strong are the cords of the love which God bears us! and not less strong is the hope which we have in Him. Thou lovest us, good Jesus, because Thy Father commandeth Thee, and Thy Father pardons us, because Thou dost entreat Him. Through Thy observance of His will and commandment it comes about that Thou lovest me, because Thy obedience requires it of Thee, and through His beholding Thy sufferings and Thy wounds come to me pardon and salvation, because so Thy merits require. Look one on the other ever, O Father and Son, look on one another without ceasing, because thus my salvation is secured! O look of power above nature, O aspect of Divine stars, whence proceed so certainly the rays of Divine grace! When will such a Son disobey? When will such a Father cease to regard His Son? And if the Son obeys, whom will He not love? And if the Father looks on His Son, who shall not be pardoned? Let us then with humble reverence say to Him, whilst presenting to Him His beloved Son, nailed for our sakes upon the Cross, *Protector noster aspice Deus, et respice in faciem Christi tui*—"Look upon us, God our Protector, and regard the face of Thy Christ."

## HOLY SATURDAY.

### MEDITATION.

#### The Obedience of the Passion.

*I am come to do Thy will, O My God. (Hebrews x. 7.)*

1. St. Paul tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure, honour and contempt, success and failure, the conversion of thousands and the drudgery of the workshop of Nazareth, the glory of the Transfiguration or the shame and agony of the Crucifixion, were all accepted by Him with equal readiness in obedience to His Eternal Father. Is this my spirit? Am I ready to do anything that God may ask of me?

2. The twin-sister of obedience is humility, and the Passion of Jesus is an example of humility almost incredible. That the King of Heaven and earth should humble Himself to take the form of a creature is in itself a wonderful miracle. How much more that He should humble Himself to be outraged and mocked and spit upon by His own creatures! What humiliation could be greater than this? What better proof of Christ's inexpressible humility?

3. Meekness, the outward expression of humility, is one of the most marked characteristics of our Lord in His Sacred Passion. The external demeanour of the Son of God was the reflection of the spirit within Him. "When He was reviled He did not revile, when He suffered He threatened not." (1 St. Peter ii. 21.) Is this my demeanour under unkindness or insult? Do I here tread in the footsteps of the Son of God?

## SPIRITUAL READING.

## The taking down from the Cross.

From *The Foot of the Cross*, pp. 380—382, by Father Faber.

Another small body of men is now approaching the summit of Calvary, and from their fixed looks it is plain that Jesus is the object of their coming. Is it some fresh outrage, some new sorrow for Mary? It is a new sorrow for Mary, but no fresh outrage. It is Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, together with their servants. Both of them were disciples of our Blessed Lord, but secretly; for they were timid men. Joseph was "a counsellor, a good and just man," who had not "consented to the counsel and doings" of the others, because he "himself looked for the kingdom of God." Nicodemus was a man learned in the Scriptures, the same who had come to Jesus by night for fear of the Jews, and had learned from Him the doctrine of regeneration.

Joseph had gone in to Pilate, to whom he probably had access in his capacity as counsellor, and had begged the Body of Jesus, which had been granted to him. He had then, as St. Matthew tells us, got "a clean linen cloth" to wrap it in, and had called on Nicodemus to accompany him to Calvary. Nicodemus, as St. John tells us, brought with him "a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight." They also brought their servants with them to assist. They approached our Blessed Lady with the profoundest reverence and sympathy, told her what they had done, and asked her permission to take the Body down from the Cross. With hearts full of the tenderest devotion to the dolours of the Immaculate Mother, they drew nigh to the Cross, and made their preparations.



They fixed the ladder against the Cross. Joseph mounted first, and Nicodemus after him. Mary, with John and Magdalen, remained immediately beneath them. It seemed as if some supernatural grace issued forth from the Adorable Body, and encircled them round, softening and subduing all their thoughts, making their hearts burn with Divine love, and hushing them in the deepest and most thrilling adoration.

Old times came back upon the Mother's heart, and the remembrance of the other Joseph, who had been so often privileged to handle the limbs, and touch the Sacred Flesh of the Incarnate Word. It would have been his office to have taken Jesus down from the Cross. But he was gone to his rest, and one that bore his name supplied his place, and it was both sweet and grievous to Mary that it should be so. One Joseph had given Him his arms to lie in, the other should give Him his own new monument to rest in; and both should pass Him from their own arms to those of Mary. It is strange too how often the timid are unexpectedly bold. These two disciples, who had been afraid to confess their Master openly when He lived, are now braving publicity when even Apostles remain within the shelter of their hiding-place. Happy two! with what sweet familiarities and precious nearness to Himself, is not Jesus recompensing their pious service at this hour in Heaven!

With gentle hand, tremblingly bold, as if his natural timidity had developed into supernatural reverence, Joseph touches the crown of thorns, and delicately loosens it from the head on which it was fixed, disentangles it from the matted hair, and without daring to kiss it, passes it to Nicodemus, who reaches it to John, from whom Mary, sinking on her knees, receives it with such devotion as no

heart but hers could hold. Every blood-stained spike seemed instinct with life, and went into her heart, tipped as it were with the Blood of her Son, inoculating her more and more deeply with the Spirit of His Passion.

Who can describe with what reverential touch, while the cold Body was a furnace of heavenly love burning against his heart, Joseph loosened the nails, so as not to crush or mutilate the blessed Hands and Feet which they had pierced. It was so hard a task that we are fain to believe angels helped him in it. Each nail was silently passed down to Mary. They were strange graces, these which were now flowing to her through the hands of her new son; yet after all not so unlike the gifts which Jesus had Himself been giving her these three-and-thirty years. Never yet had earth seen such a worship of sorrow as that with which the Mother bent over those mute relics, as they came down to her from the Cross, crusted too as they were, perhaps wet, with that Precious Blood, which she adored in its unbroken union with the Person of the Eternal Word. But with what agony was all this worship accompanied, what fresh wounds did not all these instruments of the Passion make in her heart, what old ones did they not reopen!

## EASTER SUNDAY.

### *MEDITATION.*

#### **The Fruits of the Passion.**

When Easter comes we must not forget the Passion of Jesus. The Church reminds us of it every day in Holy Mass. Jesus Himself appeared in Heaven as a lamb that had been slain. Only we have now to look to the joyful side of the Passion, to its glorious fruits.

1. The first fruit of the Passion is the exaltation of the Man Christ Jesus to sit on the right hand of God. In Him our human nature received Divine honours, and these honours were won by the sufferings of the Passion. "For the joy that was set before Him He endured the Cross, and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. xii. 2.)

2. The second fruit of the Passion is the saving from sin and eternal death all those who choose to avail themselves of the grace offered them. "He shall see a long-lived seed." Millions, who otherwise would have dwelt for ever in the abyss of Hell, are, through the graces won for them by our Lord in His Sacred Passion, the happy denizens of Heaven to all eternity. It is this which will constitute the chief glory of the Sacred Humanity.

3. The third fruit of the Passion is the crushing of Satan and all the company of Hell beneath the feet of Jesus. Never was there so glorious a victory under the guise of defeat, never a more complete or unexpected triumph. He who was in the morning an object of derision to devils and wicked men, came forth, ere evening closed, King of kings and Lord of lords, triumphant over sin and death, before whom every knee shall bow in Heaven and in earth and Hell. Thanks be to God for the unspeakable glory of the Passion of Jesus Christ!

I'll bet <sup>\$</sup>5 that  
McCortney says that  
he is going to be a <sup>justice</sup>  
Hampshire.

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